

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 137. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 1846.

PRICE 1d.

BONA FIDE.

THAT men deceive when they have an interest to be served, or an apprehended evil to be avoided, or when a jest can be made by imposing on credulity, is only too notorious. Excepting, however, in certain extraordinary persons, there is no love of deception for its own sake. The bulk of men, apart from the motives above enumerated, will be more likely to speak the truth, as far as they can, than to falsify. That is to say, in indifferent matters it is more natural to be faithful than false. The disposition of the human mind as to the reception of intelligence and the interpretation of appearances is in conformity with this view. Men do not instinctively suspect deceit. The child listens with the most perfect good faith to everything that is told it. We only, in mature years, cease to be easy of faith when we have found ourselves often deceived, often wrong in our first apprehensions.

It would not be difficult, we think, to show that the errors and delusions of all times have depended much more upon credulity than deceit; thus proving that the former is a primitive natural condition of the mind, while the latter is a comparatively rare impulse, unless where prompted by such motives as those already stated—this very credulity being one of them. To take one section of knowledge—history. The early historians of all countries—for example, our own monkish chroniclers—are full of fable. But even in those who give us the greatest prodigies, there is seldom a case of proved forgery or use of the imagination. Almost always they have some authority for what they say. They may have foolishly listened to the report of a clown, or some distorted tradition of the vulgar; or a man may have weakly adopted all the childish stories communicated by earlier writers; but scarcely ever can we detect any one in an absolute fiction of his own making. For the real sources of fabulous histories, we must partly go beyond the writers of history—to the early popular voice itself, reporting the dubious recollections of uneducated minds. Partly these errors take their rise in well enough meant efforts of the first writers to make clear the doubtful, to cause gaps to join, and give a sense to what, in the course of time, has lost its original meaning. It is, in short, to imperfections and mistakes of the intellect, not to deliberate falsification, that most of our fabulous histories are owing. The credulity is monstrous. Great blame may be due for the failure to examine and weigh evidence. But each might say, and say truly, though to his own condemnation, 'I tell the tale as 'twas told to me.'

M. Salverte's book, *The Philosophy of Magic*, which has recently been translated into English, proceeds upon the general proposition here advanced, that there is more credulity in the world than deceit. It wholly

leads to the conclusion, that in magic, in apparent prodigies, in all the mysteries and delusions of antiquity, and in all the tales which our fathers have sent down to us, there was a principle of good faith at bottom: the very deceivers were themselves, in the first place, partly, or altogether deceived; as they might well be in their imperfect knowledge of the natural circumstances with which they dealt. With regard to the fables of history, M. Salverte shows how they arose, in many instances, from men ignorantly taking up in a literal sense what was originally emblematic or metaphorical. As an example, there are many stories of early Christian saints who were said to have carried away their heads in their hands after being decapitated. This was a gross thing to state; but then remember the faith of the middle-age Christians in continued miracles. And observe how such stories might arise. In those times figured almanacs were used for the instruction of the illiterate. To explain that a saint had perished by decapitation, he was painted as standing, and holding his head in his hands. Here was the actual object presented to their minds. Then, it was common for the friends of a decapitated saint to experience great danger and difficulty in carrying away the body. Suppose this were described as done miraculously, how easy would another generation slip into the error of supposing that the holy man had himself walked away, carrying his head! As another illustration:—Near the burning mountains, north of the Missouri and the river of St Peter, dwell a people who appear to have emigrated from Mexico and the adjacent countries at the time of the Spanish invasion. According to their traditions, they had hidden themselves in the inland country at a time when the seacoast was continually infested by enormous monsters, vomiting lightning and thunder, and from whose bodies came men who, with unknown instruments, and by magical power, killed the defenceless Indians at immense distances. They observed that these monsters could not reach the land, and in order to escape from their blows, they took refuge in distant mountains. We see here that the vanquished at first doubted whether these advantages were not more to be attributed to better arms than to the power of magic. It is probable that, deceived by appearances, they endowed with life the ships which seemed to move of themselves, and transformed them into monsters; and either this prodigy has from that day been firmly rooted in their minds, or, on the contrary, it was merely a bold metaphor, invented to depict and to perpetuate so novel an event.

In like manner, it is found that many of the apparently fabulous descriptions of old writers are either simple misapprehensions of facts, or actual facts of an extraordinary nature. Some of the early Greek authors speak of 'a pigmy people, two and a half feet in height; of people constituting whole nations whose eyes were

in their shoulders; of cannibals existing among the northern Scythians; and of a country named Albania, in which were born men whose hair was white in childhood, and whose sight was exceedingly weak during the day, but became very strong in the night. Aulus Gellius treats these narrations as incredible fables; nevertheless, in the descriptions of the two first people, we recognise the Laplanders and the Samoyedes, although the diminutiveness of the one, and the manner in which the heads of the other are sunk between their shoulders, have been greatly exaggerated.' The northern cannibals may have been certain Tartar tribes whom Marco Polo describes as eating the corpses of malefactors. The men of Albania are evidently Albinoes, the name of the country being formed from the leading peculiarity of the people. So, also, Herodotus was told among the Mongols of a more northern people who slept six months of the year. He disbelieved it; but he was merely told, in an ignorant manner, of a people in the polar regions who had a night of that duration. This author has related many things believingly, which others have doubted, but doubted erroneously. We find reference made to one in a *Familiar History of Birds*, by the present bishop of Norwich, and to which M. Salverte also refers. 'Herodotus,' says his lordship, 'asserted that there was a certain small bird which, as often as the crocodiles came on shore from the river Nile, flew fearlessly within their jaws, and relieved them of a peculiar kind of leeches which infested their throats. This ancient historian added, that although other birds invariably avoided the crocodile, it never did this bird any injury. So extraordinary a story was treated as fabulous by the naturalists. It is, notwithstanding, strictly true. M. Geoffroy St Hilaire, an eminent and accurate French naturalist, confirms the fact beyond doubt. The bird alluded to is the Egyptian plover (*Charadrius Egypciacus*), which sometimes enters the mouth of the crocodile, attracted thither, not, according to his account, by leeches, but by a small insect like a gnat, which frequents the banks of the Nile in great quantities. When the crocodile comes on shore to repose, he is assailed by swarms of these gnats, which get into his mouth in such numbers, that his palate—naturally of a bright yellow colour—appears covered with a blackish-brown crust. Then it is that the little plover, which lives on these insects, comes to the aid of the half-choked crocodile, and relieves him of his tormentors; and this without any risk, as the crocodile, before shutting his mouth, takes care, by a preparatory movement, to warn the bird to be off. This singular process is, moreover, not confined to the crocodiles of Egypt; it has been noticed in those of the West Indies, where, when attacked in a similar manner by small flies called "maringouins," a little bird (*Todus viridis*), which lives chiefly on flies and insects, performs the same kind office.'

Some of the alleged miracles of antiquity were merely natural, though extraordinary and misunderstood events. 'The ignorant,' says M. Salverte, 'have been led to believe that water was metamorphosed into blood, that the heavens rained blood, and that the snow lost its natural colour, and appeared stained with blood.' The explanation is found in an animalcule called the *Ocellularia rubescens*, which is developed in certain waters, and which M. Ehrenberg has discovered to be the cause of the colour of the Red Sea—and in the development of a humble plant of a red colour (*Protococcus nivalis*) upon the surface of snow. 'In the environs of Padua, in 1819, the polenta prepared with the flour of maize appeared covered with numerous little red spots, which were soon considered, in the eyes of the superstitious, as drops of blood. The phenomenon appeared many successive days; although pious terror sought by fasts, prayers, masses, and even exorcisms, to bring it to a termination. Those feelings, excited to an almost dangerous degree, were at length calmed by a naturalist, who proved that the red spots were but the results of a mould until then unobserved.'

M. Salverte cites various instances of falls of stones from the air, which were supposed to have come miraculously. Jupiter was said to have rained stones upon the enemies of Hercules. The Arabs tell of a similar shower which crushed the Ethiopians while they were profanely besieging the sacred city of Mecca. These were of course *aërolites*—stones which actually fall from the atmosphere, and that so frequently, that their descent might, on various occasions, coincide with the time of a battle or siege. Fifty years ago, however, these stories would have been set down as wholly fabulous, because the fall of *aërolites* was not then believed by men of science. It was a frequent occurrence during all time; yet, never being observed by philosophers, it was held as only a vulgar delusion or imposture, till established by Chladni. It is, by the way, hardly fair of scientific men, when anything is inexplicable by them, to charge it upon the common people as a fable. While writing this paper, we observe two statements in a single newspaper—one referring to a shower of little frogs, the other to a live frog found in a mass of rock eighty feet below the surface. Statements of both kinds are not unfrequently met with. They are always scoffed at by the scientific world. But what is there more wonderful in the fall of showers of young frogs, than in the fall of showers of the *Protococcus nivalis*? Or, if a frog, and certain other animals of low grades be, as we know, capable of reviving after being kept for an indefinite time in a mass of ice, why may not such a reptile have survived from the time it was enclosed (possibly in that state) in the sand from which the rock was formed? The ordinary attempt to account for the phenomenon, by supposing the animal to have fallen into its place through a chink, is purely ridiculous. So is the supposition that every statement of a live frog in stone is a fable. The scientific men are merely ignorant of the natural principles concerned, and have not the magnanimity to admit it.

The real basis of Thaumaturgy, or magic, and of all the impostures of the ancient priesthoods, was, according to M. Salverte, an acquaintance with the secrets of nature. The practitioners had gained some knowledge of physics; and, by parading their experiments, easily deluded the vulgar into a belief of their own supernatural character. 'To work magically, to conjure genii, or so to invoke the gods as to constrain them to apparent obedience, required very extensive preparations; but over the nature and operation of these the veil of mystery was thrown. Plants and animals, collected in secret, were in various ways combined and subjected to the action of fire; and scarcely one step was taken without the assistance of some formula, or the consultation of books, the loss of which was almost equivalent to the loss of all magic power. Such were the sources of the power of the greater number of the Thaumaturgists, who were truly scholars of natural philosophy, and who were forced continually to seek in their sacred volumes the prescriptions, without which they could neither properly work out their charms nor display their delusions. Traces of the existence of these books are found among a people fallen, in the present age, into the most lamentable barbarism, but whose traditions are connected with a very ancient, and probably an advanced state of civilisation. The Baschkirs believe that the *black books*, the text of which they allege originated in hell, give to their possessor, provided he is capable of interpreting them, an absolute empire over nature and demons. These books, together with the power which they conferred, generally descended, by inheritance, to the individual among the pupils of their possessor whom he judged most worthy to succeed him. Sound works on physics and on chemistry, as applied to the arts, might replace with advantage the magic books of the Baschkirs; but we are still not much in the advance of the time, in which certain persons, indifferent as to either the enlightenment or the ignorance of mankind, would have assumed that such works could only emanate from the Principle of Evil.'

It is remarkable that so early a philosopher as Democritus became convinced of this being the true explanation of the works of the magi. 'His philosophy,' says Lucian, 'brought him to this conclusion, that magic was entirely confined to the application and the imitation of the laws and works of nature.' M. Salverte displays an immense number of illustrations of this doctrine, and leaves a general conviction of its truth. If it be true, does it not show an enormous amount of deliberate imposture in the ancient world, and so far tend to annihilate the proposition that deceit is not a conspicuous feature in our natural character? We think not. It appears from M. Salverte's work, that the magicians and priests were themselves deceived men. Such knowledge as they had, was in the form of detached facts respecting the phenomena of nature. They had no methodised view of natural philosophy. Such secrets of nature as they had acquired came to them as mysteries, not as the results of laws established for the government of the world. These secrets were, therefore, necessarily objects of superstitions regard even to the magicians. The silly formalities which accompanied their experiments were thus not necessarily impostures, but might be results of their own self-delusions. The history of a secret of nature in their hands we can imagine to be this. First lighted on by accident, it would appear to the superstitious mind of the discoverer as a special revelation of a divine mystery to himself. The superstitious ceremonies in which he had been engaged at the time would appear to him essential to the result, and would accordingly be handed down, and ever after practised, in connexion with it. The whole stock of the mystics would be but an accumulation of such discoveries, with their attendant mummeries, all regarded as prodigies, and not in any relation to nature as a principle. And all this we may the more readily admit, if we reflect on the obscure and marvellous notions as to nature and its phenomena which have prevailed among philosophers almost down to our own time; for example, in the minds of Tycho and Kepler. Nay, for that matter, are we sure that a just notion of nature and its relation to the Divine Author is yet established among us?

There is something satisfactory in thus regarding mankind as more truthful by nature than their practice would sometimes lead us to suppose. It delights our moral sentiments, as it is always agreeable to think well of our fellow-creatures, and to find occasion and justification for confiding in them. It also answers well to our notions of final causes, because, constituted as we are, we cannot learn much by personal examination or experience, and must therefore take no small portion of our knowledge from testimony. If man were naturally untruthful, what a limit were imposed on our knowledge! It is only through his being naturally truthful, that we get ninety-nine things in a hundred of what we know. It may be startling to hear testimony spoken of in this manner, for certainly deceptions are frequent. But those who are so startled, would only need to place against the instances of deception, the vast number of occasions we have every day to act according to what we are told, or to put trust in the probity of those connected with us, in order to see that the instances of true testifying and true acting are as thousands to units of those in which wilful deceit has been practised. It is necessary, at the same time, to be cautious in the reception of much that comes before us, for of course imposture is often practised. But it is a sad necessity. In common society, to be cautious and sceptical appears clever, and excites respect. But, in reality, it is a vicious state of mind, to answer a state of vice in others, and only is admired because found practically useful. Apart from the question of utility, the credulous state of mind is one of pure moral beauty in comparison. We too readily despise it, not reflecting that it is the primitive, child-like, innocent state of the mind; the state in which we would all be, but for the existence of deceivers amongst us, and the liability of the human intellect to

apprehend and report facts incorrectly. Some there are whom nothing pleases more than to make fun of scientific inquirers by misleading them, on merely finding that such persons do not suspect their veracity. Where probable things are told, this is properly no fun at all; for why should probable things be disbelieved when they are communicated by an apparently serious person? Where even improbable things are related, the same may often be said; for are we not forced every day to believe things which we would have previously said were improbable? Amateurs of this kind of amusement do not consider what results from their actions. Why, it is just one of the greatest of all the obstructive agencies in the path of truth, that we are so liable to be deluded by impostors and ill-designing misinformers. The one proven case of imposture is, in the mass of testimony, like the dead fly in the ointment of the apothecary. By it all previous labour is undone; the whole task is to be renewed. Till it is forgotten, the best accredited truths will only get their passports examined; they will make no real progress. The destruction of a collected audience by a wanton cry of 'fire!' is therefore the type of an imposture in matters of science. In the whole of this system of hoaxing, as it is playfully called, there is even a more special evil: it is teaching the semi-vice of suspicion to a mind which would otherwise remain candid and innocent. Oh, it is unholy work! and, above all, it is so to children. Alas! are deceptions for an end so few in this world, that even what are called well-meaning persons should think it necessary to do what in them lies to break up that confidence between mind and mind which we bring 'from God, who is our home?'

THE STRAWBERRY GIRL—A TALE.

'STRAWBERRIES—fine ripe straw-ber-ries!' Such is the cry that steals in long cadence down London streets during June and part of July; making the mouths of little errand-boys water, as the fragrant-scented basket passes them, and breaking upon the reveries of those who sit within-doors, in the deep solitudes of quiet streets; bringing Epicurean thoughts to holiday children, and old memories to wiser folk. There it comes—faint at a distance—almost sweet when far off—nearer in its full glory—then gradually dying away in indistinct echoes at the farther end of the street. And here sit we, pondering over the thoughts it leaves behind.

First, we think of Leigh Hunt's Essay on Strawberries—how he lectures on the rich fruit with a love worthy of Pomona! discussing the various merits of strawberries and sugar, strawberries and cream, and strawberries in their native simplicity; diverging to their useful and healthy properties, and alluding to all the writers who have lauded them. Then we think over all his graceful pen has written: we have fancied strawberries have tasted sweeter ever since we read what he says of them. And lastly, we remember the old poem praising this fruit in Italian sweet and luscious as the strawberries themselves.

Finally, our musings become more personal, and bring us, in spite of many years and many miles, to a garden where, once upon a time, we ourselves, and one or two more of whom we need not speak, used to be; and we think of one strawberry-bed in particular, beside which we little elves loved to sit or lie on the ground, toasting about the thick leaves in eager haste for the purple treasures beneath, and never quitting our lowly position, until, as far as the little hands could reach, nothing but leaves were left. And then appear the long line of laburnum-trees, and the two willows growing into one in loving union, and the forbidden bunches of jessamine—precious, because so rarely allowed to our greedy hands—and our special white-currant-tree, which no one intruded upon. But we are thinking of all these, and forgetting the strawberries.

Few whose tables are daily garnished with this delicious fruit, while in season, ever cast a thought as

to whence comes this abundant supply, making the streets of London almost like a strawberry garden with pleasant odours. But let any one drive down the great western outlet of the metropolis, towards Kew, Chiswick, or Twickenham, and he will perceive the air laden with the perfume of strawberries; he will meet innumerable groups of women, laden with baskets which are filled with those anomalous wicker cornucopias entitled *pottles*, in which, like the good things of this world, the finest and ripest of the fruits are temptingly placed at the top, while the smaller and less valuable are carefully hidden from view at the bottom. But alas, and alas! a moraliser could find many things in London to remind him of the strawberry pottle.

And this is the secret of the strawberry deluge. Every year, from Shropshire and from Wales, multitudes of women come to London, as the Irish labourers in harvest, for the strawberry season. The fruit is cultivated in immense gardens, extending from Fulham to Hampton, and many sloping down to the river-side. Here the women congregate to gather the fruit, and dispose it in pottles for sale. You may hear their ringing laughter and songs from behind the thick hedges on a June afternoon; and you are sure to see them patiently carrying their heavy baskets, and trudging along, nor murmuring at the heat. Poor souls! some of them will walk from fifteen to twenty miles a-day—up at daybreak, or before, to gather the fruit—walking six or eight miles to Covent Garden market—back again for another load; and all through dry, dusky, shadowless roads, where are few trees or green lanes. Yet many a pretty and cheerful face peeps from under the basket, which is borne in such a graceful attitude on the head; and many a true and tried woman's heart is among these poor labourers: mothers who come miles from home to toil for six weeks, that they may bring home five or ten pounds to clothe their fatherless children; young girls, who, strong in their innocence, go forth to work for their aged parents, or often to gain a small portion wherewith to begin married life with some country lover. And to such, toil seems light; and humble though they be, there is hope and happiness for the poor strawberry girls.

Not very long ago—when, it matters not—among this band of humble heroines was a girl named Alice Clare. Her father was once the owner of a small farm in Shropshire, at which he and his active wife were the chief labourers; and Alice was their only child. Poor they were, but still not very poor; the hard-working father and thrifty mother always had wherewithal 'to keep the wolf from the door,' and to bid the houseless welcome therein. 'Give me neither poverty nor riches,' was the wise prayer of a good man in olden days; and in truth such a state is the happiest portion. Alice Clare had a happy childhood, more than her class in life generally experience. She had no rude brothers or cross elder sisters to mar her cheerfulness, and was the delight of her father's heart and home. She was a pretty, gentle child, not strikingly beautiful, as befits a heroine, but yet fair enough to win love, and of sweetness to keep the love thus won. Every one in the village liked pretty Alice Clare; but her best friend was the clergyman's daughter. From her Alice gained an education which raised her a little, but not too much, above her sphere; and learned, at the same time, not to despise her homely parents.

So time passed on, ripening Alice into blooming womanhood, and making her parents' heads grayer each year. A turn came in their fortune. There was the old story—falling crops, burning ricks, and cattle dead; so that the year which had found Matthew Clare a contented farmer, well in the world's eye, and hopeful in his own heart, left him with the cloud of impending poverty hanging over him. January came with its cold dreary days, and his heart sank within him. He had not courage to tell his wife and daughter what he feared. One Sunday they left him to go to the village

church: they returned—the spirit of the husband and father was flown to keep an eternal Sabbath. He was sitting in his chair, the Bible on his knee, in the same position in which they had left him two hours before. Sudden death—that end so dreaded, and yet, in many instances, a blessing, not an evil—had taken him away in a moment. His death revealed all; and that night all was fear, anguish, and ruin in the penniless widow's dwelling.

Alice Clare was now poor, fatherless, almost motherless; for her mother's strong mind was weakened by this heavy blow, and she clung to her child for that support and counsel which the young look to receive from the old. But adversity, which enfeebles a weak character, only shows the hidden resources of a true and strong heart; and Alice's rose in proportion to the sorrows that weighed upon her. She knew that a firm will and patient endurance must bring forth good fruit in the end; and, untried in the world as she was, Alice did not fear. The light-hearted, but feeble girl, clinging to every one for support, was now a woman in thought and deed; but the grief which had caused this change, in spite of her courage, weighed heavily upon her. Her step was slower than before, and her lips were oftener pressed together in anxious thought than dimpling with smiles.

Alice had one honey-drop in this her bitter cup, and that was—love. And yet in her simple and placid spirit this was far from being exalted into that grand passion sung by poets, and supposed to be all-absorbing, all-delighting. Alice's love was a quiet, calm affection, which made her happy in thinking she was the happiness of another. She rested in this thought like a bird in its nest; and it was a refuge in all her troubles to feel and know there was one who would never forsake her—that come what would, she was not alone. There was no sentiment, no affectation, in this love between Alice and Gilbert Millward; it had grown with their youth, unconsciously to themselves, until they discovered that there was no one on earth that they loved better than each other. This mutual affection met with no romantic crosses and trials; no one opposed the union of the farmer's only child and the carpenter's son—steady, good, and well-principled as he was. So Alice and Gilbert were affianced, with the good-will and good wishes of the whole parish, and they were to be married at the end of harvest.

Alice's fallen fortunes could not change the love of Gilbert; but alas! all his exertions could not suffice to procure wherewithal to commence wedded life, now that they were deprived of the assistance which Matthew Clare had promised. Their union was postponed, and this was a double sorrow; for Alice had at first comforted herself with the thought that her mother would not regret her lost home by her daughter's cheerful fireside. But this was not to be at present at least; for Alice and Gilbert were prudent lovers. Still, regrets would come at times.

'Oh, if I could only work to gain something to begin with!' Gilbert would say when their sorrows were a little forgotten, and the bursting spring brought with it hopeful thoughts and future plans; 'if we had only enough to get through the winter, how happy we might all be!'

'Patience and hope,' Alice would answer, as she clung to her lover's strong arm, and looked in his affectionate eyes, and knew that, to such a true heart and active hand, nothing could come amiss, and they must be happy at last. Still, Alice would often anxiously turn over in her mind plan after plan whereby the needful sum might be gained—some vague, some hopeless, all futile, as it seemed.

At last a chance appeared. There was an old friend of Alice's, a widow Austin, to whom she told her troubles, and her wish to gain money.

'There is only one way that I know of,' said the good woman; 'but how you will like it, I cannot tell. You know it is now May. In a few weeks I shall go to

London for the strawberry season, or my poor little grandchild can have no schooling this winter. Suppose, Alice, you were to go with me? I generally bring home ten or fifteen pounds—that would do for you; and why should not you try it, my dear?’

Great was the opposition from mother and lover; but Alice would go. The idea of gaining fifteen pounds was too precious to be lost. Gilbert's pride revolted at the thought of letting her go; but Alice felt no shame in a good work.

‘I am a poor girl now,’ she said. ‘I must work by the labour of my hands; but that is no disgrace. And you will trust me, Gilbert?’

‘God bless you, Alice! I would trust you anywhere; but it is very hard for you to leave us in this way.’

‘But then I do not go alone; and when I come back rich—only think, Gilbert, fifteen pounds!’

But Gilbert thought more of parting with his sweet Alice than of the fifteen pounds; and when she had taken farewell of her mother, whom Gilbert promised to cherish as his own until her return, they stood sorrowfully at the end of the lane for the last word and the last kiss. Gilbert watched her with his eyes as she crossed the field with Widow Austin, and then turned with a sad heart to his work.

Alice was now one of the strawberry girls, and none worked harder, or with a more cheerful heart, though her slighter form and fairer face contrasted strongly with her companions—many of them hardy, uncouth, and rough-looking women. But the care of Alice's affectionate friend encircled her as with a shield; and even the rudest of the Welsh mountaineers, and the coarse Wiltshire dames, were gentle towards the reserved and quiet stranger. Alice began to look forward to the end of her labours with hope; and every now and then the good news from home, in Gilbert's half-illegible but affectionate scrawl, cheered her heart, and she did not feel the burning sun, nor the interminable roads, with her basket on her head, and the rude but precious love-treasures in her bosom. One day there came a letter; but, strange to say, the writing was not Gilbert's, though it was evidently dictated by him:—‘My poor dear Alice,’ it began, ‘do not be frightened at a strange hand; but I have had a sore trial. I don't know when I may write to you myself: the doctor says never. God help us both! Alice, poor Gilbert will never see your sweet face any more. I was in that dreadful thunder-storm last week; we were all making hay in your poor father's field, and the lightning struck me. I don't remember anything about it; but I was a long time before I came to myself, and when I did, I could not see. My poor Alice, my dear wife that was to be, I am now quite blind! How shall I work for you and your mother! Oh, Alice, Alice! there is no hope for us! You must not marry a poor, blind, helpless man who can do nothing for you; and the doctor has looked at my eyes, and says there is no hope. My cousin Ned writes this for me. Alice, my own dear Alice! write and pity your unhappy but affectionate lover till death—

GILBERT MILLWARD.’

When Alice had read to the end of this letter, she did not weep or shriek, but her whole frame grew rigid like stone. She slid noiselessly down on the hard ground, and for the first time in her life she fainted. At Mrs Austin's cries, all the women in the strawberry garden gathered round the unhappy girl, with wondering though kind-hearted inquiries and aid. Alice slowly recovered—the poor have no time to give way to sorrow—and she had that morning to walk into London with her basket. She gathered up her strength, and set forth; but her limbs moved mechanically, and there was a weight like lead at her heart, though her eyes were hot and tearless. Her eyes, too, had a strange wild look, that made Mrs Austin almost afraid to speak to her; and she silently followed the unhappy girl as she fulfilled her duties and returned from London.

They came back when afternoon was fading into evening. It was the day of one of the Chiswick fêtes,

and carriage after carriage dashed by, filled with beautiful and happy creatures—some gay with their wealth, and beauty, and rich attire; others feeling that all this was nothing compared to the one, loved and loving, who sat beside them. But all seemed happy; and none noticed the poor strawberry girl, who crawled along, overwhelmed by the dust of their carriages as they swept past. She was no shadow on their felicity.

Alice came through that green lane by the river-side at Chiswick, which seems made for loving walks and lonely happiness. Old trees overhang the narrow road, making pleasant shadows all the day, and on one hand flows the broad and beautiful Thames, almost at one's very feet. Here and there quaint old houses are seen, and glimpses appear through the trees of the villas of the rich and noble; but for this, the place is one of the deepest solitude. Alice saw not the beauties around her; her eyes were closed to all; her heart only could see, and that beheld nothing but Gilbert—poor Gilbert!—blind, and lonely, and desolate. But woman's love grows stronger in suffering. Gilbert, in his blindness, was far dearer to her than when he was the pride of the neighbourhood, and when she exulted in being the choice of one like him. We once read of a beautiful girl whose lover returned from the wars frightfully shattered and disfigured.

‘Surely you will not marry him now?’ said a friend.

‘I would marry him if he had only enough of mortal frame left to contain his soul,’ was her noble and touching reply. And the lovely girl did marry him, wreck as he was; and they were happy, most happy. Like this high-born beauty felt the poor Shropshire girl. She never thought for a moment of giving up her lover, blind as he was. Her only thought was how she could singly maintain her mother and Gilbert, since it was to her alone that both now must look.

Alice reached Kew Bridge, and worn, exhausted, leant against the parapet for rest. The evening breeze came cool from the river, and the waters below looked so clear, and blue, and peaceful—God forgive the poor girl if the thought more than once crossed her mind, what a sweet and calm bed of rest would be there for the heavy-laden with sorrow for which there was no hope!

‘Oh, mother! oh, Gilbert!’ cried Alice, while a gush of blessed tears melted the frost of despair from her heart, as she sat down on the bridge beside her strawberry basket, and hiding her face on her knees, wept long and bitterly. It was late in the evening, and no one passed, or Alice would not thus have given way. But at last, unseen by her, a passenger crossed the bridge.

He was a very old man, low in stature, and bending also. Even in youth there could have been no beauty in his face, except his eyes, and they were lovely yet. Our heart warms to such wherever we meet them, in old or young, rich or poor, man or woman. They are deep, lustrous, but not sparkling—truthful and loving—in colour blue or gray, we care not which, so that they bear the expression we love. May such eyes never know tears! The old gentleman—for a gentleman he evidently was—bent these kind eyes of his on the cowering form of Alice Clare. He longed to ask the cause of such grief, but was too delicate-minded to do so at once.

‘I want to buy some strawberries, my good girl,’ said he. Alice started up, and the good old man appeared to be examining closely the few remaining pottles, lest she should think he was noticing her confusion. The strawberries were chosen and purchased, while the stranger looked with pity on the deadly paleness of Alice's face.

‘You seem tired,’ said he in that gentle tone which goes at once to the hearts of the unfortunate; ‘have you come very far this hot day?’

‘Indeed I have; but I would not mind that, only for—’ Alice stopped, and grew crimson with shame at her openness.

‘Only for what?’ said the old gentleman. ‘I can

tell by your tongue that you come from my county—from Salop, are you not?

'Yes, sir,' answered Alice, and her face brightened; 'from near O—.'

'I know the place well,' said her companion; and by degrees he succeeded in drawing from Alice her name and her father's misfortunes, and how she had come to gain money by strawberry-gathering. But of her deeper sorrows Alice did not speak. When she curtsied to go away, the old gentleman put in her hand a piece of gold.

'Take this to your mother,' said he, knowing that in such-wise Alice could not refuse the gift; 'I saw her once when she was a girl, but I daresay she has forgotten me. However, I am coming to live in O—, and I may see her again.'

He watched Alice as she descended the bridge. 'Poor girl—poor girl!' he said half aloud; 'she is not happy. There is something else: I am sure she did not tell me all.'

'If you please, sir, Alice did not, indeed,' said the ever-faithful dame Austin, who had silently stood at a little distance, when Alice thought she was alone. And, begging many pardons, the good soul told Alice's whole story, including the sorrowful news of the morning. The old gentleman patiently listened to the rude tale, made still ruder by the broad Shropshire accent in which it was told. At last he said, 'Tell Alice not to fear, nor her lover either. I will think of something for them; they shall be married yet. Take that poor girl home as soon as she has earned her money; she is too good and gentle for London. And here is something in case she should not earn enough for her journey also.'

The rough Shropshire woman had a kind heart; she called down blessings innumerable on the friend of the fatherless, and hastened joyfully to cheer poor Alice with the hopeful news.

The strawberry season ended, and Alice was once more at home. Full of sorrowful love was the meeting between her and Gilbert. The mother was all joy at her daughter's safe return; but when they were all seated once more in the lowly cottage, and begun to talk of future plans, Alice saw the agonized expression of Gilbert's face. Then her timid love seemed merged into the open affection of a wife; she went up to him, and, kissed those blind eyes which would behold her no more for ever.

'I will never, never give you up, Gilbert. I never did love any but you, and I never shall. Come what may, I will be your wife—your own Alice!'

And so Gilbert's heart was set at rest; and as he went about, led by the fond hand of his early love, he looked almost as happy as before this mournful blindness fell upon him.

Alice had not been a week at home when she received a letter. It was from her aged friend at Kew Bridge. He told her that, in the bank of O—, she would find a sum which she must receive as a marriage portion—it amounted to £300!

'I meant this sum,' wrote he, 'as a gift to a charity in my native place; but I now think that it may be more worthily bestowed in making happy a girl like Alice Clare. Take it, and God bless you and your children after you! May they grow up to be like yourself—humble, God-fearing, and brave in adversity as you have been!'

Alice Clare and Gilbert Millward were married; and the blind husband grew, in course of time, not to grieve for that affliction which had shown forth so plain the devotedness of his Alice's love. He learned various useful employments, by which he added considerably to the gains of his wife's tasteful fingers, which, by instruction that she could now obtain, soon became the fabricators of all the caps and bonnets for miles round. The mother lived in that happy home with her children and grandchildren: she attended to the dairy, her great delight; while Gilbert's chief amusement was in his garden, which he soon learned to cultivate with skill, in

spite of his blindness. And it was often noticed that the portion of ground which won his chief care, and on which his wife's eyes rested with most delight, was a large, rich, and beautiful bed of strawberries.

D. M. M.

THE USE OF THE CORSET.

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER TO A LADY FROM DR

REVELLE-PARISE.

ALTHOUGH I have every desire to justify the confidence you honour me with, you must admit, madam, you put me to rather a severe proof. You ask my opinion upon the employment of corsets—whether they are, in fact, as injurious to the health of women as has been said; and whether medical men have not, upon this point, somewhat exaggerated? I will know with what scruples and fears your maternal affection fills you upon this subject. Your daughter, whom I have attended from her infancy, approaches an age at which the desire to please is very natural. But is it possible to please without an elegant form? and can this be attained without a narrow waist?—in other words, without the agency of the corset? These are important questions, not to be decided without care and circumspection. It is long since the subject has been agitated, but always uselessly, the triumph of the corset only becoming the more assured. Rousseau changed the opinions of his contemporaries on many points. By his eloquent declamations he obliged mothers to suckle their offspring; and, more than this, his doctrines and principles have shaken kingdoms, raised nations against kings, and cast down the powerful; society has been moved to its lowest depths, and Europe convulsed for fifty years. But I ask you, what has this philosopher gained against whalebones transformed into corsets? Absolutely nothing. In vain did he say that a woman in a corset was destitute of grace, and seemed cut in two, like a wasp: the witticism obtained currency, but the thing remained. Peter I. humiliates and dissolves his formidable force, the Strelitz, scarcely a murmur being heard; he obliges the Russians to shave their beards, and he is seriously menaced; but what would have become of him had he dared proscribe the Russian ladies the use of whalebone, or had in anyway meddled with their toilet? The Emperor Joseph II. prohibited the use of corsets, and ordained that criminals only condemned to labour should wear them. All this was useless at the end of a few years.

But what, then, is this formidable power which carries the day against kings, philosophers, physicians, reason, and common sense? Who is there that is ignorant of it? Who does not know its imperious decisions, its sentences without appeal? In fact, does not *fashion* govern the world; and, as regards your sex, is it not the only sovereign who reigns and governs? Upon those who violate her decrees she inflicts the chastisement of ridicule, and at once all opposition ceases. Reason may raise her voice, but every ear is closed. Reason advises, fashion acts; so that we may easily guess which will prove victorious.

You see, then, madam, why this subject, so learnedly treated by so many doctors, has as yet furnished such unsatisfactory results. I maintain the principle, however, that we must never weary in preaching the good and the useful. Something always results; and in this manner a great evil may become diminished, and a small one reduced to nothing. How many strange customs, prejudicial to health, have disappeared with time and perseverance in good advice! I might cite the swaddling-clothes and bandages of children, the hairy pig-tails, hair-powder, garters, and buckles of men.

What would you say if some one seriously proposed to you to forcibly compress one of your limbs for a long period? They might indeed tell you that the smaller it became, the more elegant it would be; but you would not fail to resist such torture. Besides the pain, the

compressed part would soon diminish in size, and waste away more or less completely. The pale and thin muscles would no longer enjoy their natural vigour and activity, the vessels would diminish in size, and the part soon lose its strength and beauty. Now, do you not think that this same compression, exerted upon parts of the body which contain the most delicate and important organs, must be attended with yet more disastrous consequences? These organs, pushed, squeezed, agglomerated together, necessarily lose that development which is indispensable for their action and energy. And observe, this pressure is not made upon any isolated point; it embraces an extensive surface, and just that which corresponds to the organs which are the very source of life. Take a large corset, and measure its height and diameters; and afterwards, when it is tightened to the degree fashion requires and suffering permits, compare these admeasurements with the body of the person who wears it, and you will be astonished at the result.

But where is the use of reasoning or experience for those who are convinced not only that the corset is not injurious, but that it is useful? Who is not aware that a thousand marvellous qualities are attributed to it? It supports the waist, strengthens the body, gives grace to the movements, and so on! As to its inconveniences, these are rarely alluded to, or wholly denied. Far more than this, if the shape is ungainly, the corset will rectify everything; and it even cures a vicious conformation of the spine and chest! No sooner are the fatal words, 'She is all one side,' pronounced respecting a young girl, than every description of corset fit for the reparation, or at all events the disguise of the evil, is sent for; the fact being, that these corsets, so far from relieving the deformity, assist and augment it, by compressing, enfeebling, and wasting the muscles. No matter; the torture continues, as if this fact were not known. The patience of women in this respect is worthy of admiration. Ask any of them if she is not too tight, but never will she allow it, however extreme her suffering.

It must not, however, be believed that this instrument of torture is of modern invention. More than one poet of antiquity has reproached his countrywomen with its employment. The Greek ladies had their *sefodome*, and the Roman matrons their *castula*, a kind of small tunic, which was tightened around the waist. According to Ovid (*Fasti* iv. 147), the corset would seem to have been in as great request among the Roman girls as among our own. Yet women of other nations reject this article of dress with advantage. Lady W. Montagu observes, that nothing can be more admirable than the forms of the Turkish ladies, who regarded her corset as a machine in which she had been enclosed by her husband, and whence she could not extricate herself. The Spanish women, also so celebrated for the elegant contour of their shapes, do not employ the corset. It was only during the lifetime of Catherine de Medicis that the custom of wearing the tightened corset was introduced into France.

Some women have discontinued this article of dress, whether from fancy or necessity, without sustaining any inconvenience. It is the long *habit* of wearing it which deceives most. Without it, they do not seem dressed—as if something were wanting. This may be so for the first day or two of the experiment, but at the end of a fortnight the loss would not be perceived; just as in the case of a ring long worn on the finger, or any other object habitually employed. Many young women, obliged to renounce this strange article of the toilet, have quickly found their health improve. The blood has then been allowed free circulation, the lungs full expansion; and the free movements permitted to the body have soon reproduced and preserved that fresh, animated complexion, the principal beauty of the young, but which they so rarely possess in large towns. Surely the preservation of health is of more consequence than the retention of these pieces of whalebone? If a young woman, with the most beautiful form and richest pur-

tion, does not possess health, adieu to happiness and pleasure, for her life is strewn with thorns. Exemption from suffering is almost everything in our rapid and short passage through life; but to suffer from one's own fault, because we have desired it—is this not deserving the chastisement which we have braved, but which awaits us?

What is most singular is, that women are aware of the injuriousness of the corset—they instinctively feel that its action is an unnatural and eminently hurtful one. Here is the proof. If, by accident, a lady falls ill in a crowded assembly of any kind, a general cry is raised by the others, 'Cut her lace!' This is done instantly—the compressing machine is opened, air rushes into the lungs, the victim breathes, and recovers; which, however, will not prevent her recommencing the next day, so inexorable and powerful is this malicious demon—fashion.

I am aware that, in appreciating on the one hand these inconveniences of the corset, and on the other wishing to sacrifice to custom, you will ask me if there is not some form of this machine less dangerous than another. It is true that the form and size exert much influence on the results and effects which are produced; so that large, strongly-whaleboned or busked, stiff, inelastic corsets—*cuirasse-corsets*—are more hurtful than small ones; but the degree of constriction exerted is the one simple and essential measure of the degree of mischief occasioned. In fact, the varieties of form are of little consequence. A corset which is exactly adapted to the body, without exerting too much constriction or compression, without impeding development of the growth, or producing any ill effect, does not exist; and this philosopher's stone of a *model corset* will never be discovered, whatever pains be taken. It is impossible to mould the form of a nymph in an apparatus of iron. An evident proof that these machines are hurtful, is derived from the fact, that the endeavour is constantly made to render them as little fatiguing as possible. The material has been varied: they have been constructed in caoutchouc, and transformed into light apparatus permeable to air; and some are capable of instantaneous unlacing. But all this is useless. The grand hygienic problem of a *corset without danger*, will probably for ever remain unsolved. In all there is this dilemma—either the corset is worn loose, and then where is its utility? or it exerts compression, and is then dangerous. Whenever I see these perfidious instruments of torture exposed for sale, I cannot avoid shuddering at thinking of all the evils enclosed within their elegant contours. I can believe that you intend your daughter's corset shall be of a proper form and size, and not worn injuriously tight. But observe, that besides engendering a dangerous habit, the exact point of constriction is difficult to seize. Between the little and the too much there is a mathematical line difficult to be constantly followed. And then experience teaches us that women, and even girls, have a mischievous tendency to tighten themselves more and more, and especially if threatened with becoming somewhat stout.

It is a very unfortunate circumstance, that the inconveniences and diseases—the certain consequences of the abuse of the corset—are never immediate; they are long engendering in the substance of the organs so constantly pressed upon and crushed. The corset does not kill suddenly, like arsenic; therefore it is harmless! Can there be a more dangerous or murderous syllogism? When the physician, who, from long experience, foresees the mischief that will arrive, and informs a woman how injurious is this lacing and girthing herself in, she smiles, declares that he is mistaken, for she is not tight, and that habit has rendered her capable of supporting all. She has resisted the effects, and will continue to do so. Her health is good; why should she change her plans? She does not reflect that this condition of pressure is in direct violation of the laws of nature. The most noble organs are deprived of the play and development essential to their functions. Even the very

bones of the trunk and chest suffer under this pernicious influence. To convince yourself of this, have the courage to examine a skeleton, the solid framework of our fragile organisation. On the one hand, you see the spine—the solid yet mobile support of the whole animal structure. A multitude of nerves escape from its lateral openings, giving life to the internal organs, and establishing relations with the brain. This spinal column is covered externally on each side by bundles of muscles—the moving power. Now, I ask you whether a corset, worn habitually tight, must not interfere with, and prevent the action of, these muscles and those of the shoulders? On the other hand, observe that the ribs, forming a kind of bony and movable cage, represent a cone, having its apex above, and its base below. Well, the corset acts in a totally opposite direction. It compresses and binds in this base, whose expansion is indispensable for the play of the lungs and the act of respiration. Can there exist a worse or more fatal practice? We laugh at the Chinese ladies; but the deformed and squeezed-up state of their feet does not at least affect the general health. A mother protects her daughter from the effects of the slightest draught of air, from the least damp, from the rays of a burning sun, and yet exposes her to the dangerous compression of a large corset.

Although all portions of the body suffer, and tend to morbid changes, when submitted to great and more or less prolonged pressure, there are some organs which seem especially destined to endure these evils. Among these are the lungs and heart. It is through their agency that respiration and circulation are accomplished. They are, so to speak, the very roots of life. Now, I ask, what must take place when the cavity containing them is narrowed, and when the extent of their action is limited by the tyrannical exigencies of the corset? The diseases which result are numerous, always serious, and so much the more incurable, as they proceed from a predisposition become constitutional. If you were aware of the fine texture, the delicate network of the lungs, the sensibility of these precious organs, the abundance of blood which penetrates their innermost recesses, there to become revived, you would only be astonished that these diseases were not more frequent still. And yet, will it be believed that women, having the chest thus compressed and narrowed, will read aloud, or engage in singing and declamation? From the most straitened organ the highest amount of action is demanded!

But the chest is not the only organ exposed to this severe compression of the corset. The liver, placed immediately below the ribs at the very point where constriction is greatest, equally suffers. Hence results pain in the side, indigestion, and diseases of the organ, with chronic jaundice. The stomach itself, compressed by the bone of the corset, does not enjoy its natural vigour and extensibility. Hence distaste for food, painful digestion, languor, pallid or pimpled countenance, &c. Boemmering, a celebrated German physician, found a stomach nearly divided into two parts by the excessive and long-continued pressure of a steel-busk. I know well that few women would submit to such torture; but some there are whom no rein or prudence can restrain.

It is for balls, parties, theatres, &c. that interminable preparations for the toilet are especially made, and that the most destructive conspiracy against health is contrived. The lady of elegant form who repairs to these, is girt in every possible manner. Her shoes are as small and narrow as possible; the entire body surrounded by a large and strong corset mercilessly laced; the clasps of her dress maintain the ground already gained; and her girdle exercises no less constriction. We need not mention bracelets, necklaces, &c. which, nevertheless, exert injurious pressure upon the neck and arms; so that every part of the body is encircled with more or less tight ligatures. Thus fettered and bound up, she repairs to the place of assembly, where the air is con-

taminated by a crowded company, while the mirrors are tarnished, and the candles melt, in a temperature equal to that of Senegal. Nevertheless, she will remain here for five or six hours, perhaps dancing, or singing in a more or less loud voice. It is not until she has returned home, and removed the instruments of torture, that she can breathe. By a miracle of nature she has not succumbed to efforts which the most robust man could not support for an hour. And yet this is the feeble sex!

NARRATIVE OF JUAN VAN HALEN.

HIS ESCAPE FROM THE INQUISITION.—CONCLUSION.

We have seen how Van Halen was arrested on a charge of conspiracy, imprisoned in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and tortured to extort a confession. All this, however, was in vain; he never breathed the name of an accomplice, but steadfastly maintained his innocence of any design to overthrow the throne or subvert the Catholic religion. Under these circumstances he was retained at Madrid, where every hope of release was gradually receding, till his misfortunes excited the interest of the orphan girl who had been adopted by Don Marcelino, the keeper of the prison, and who, it appears, was in the habit of cleaning his cell. Without exchanging a word with Juan, she adopted a truly ingenious mode of communicating that she had it in her power to be of service to him as opportunity might offer. This was by leaving her ear-ring under his pillow—a signal to which he responded by replacing it wound round with a lock of his hair. For three days after this no one entered his cell, nor did the girl make her appearance. On the fourth day, however, 'I was removed, as usual, to the adjoining dungeon while mine was being cleaned; and on my return thither I hastened to examine the bed; but the ear-ring was not there. I was disappointed; but suddenly I perceived that my watch was gone from the usual place at the head of the bed. I searched, and found it under my pillow—the hand pointing to the wrong hour. I could not understand this sign; but on the following day, just at the hour indicated, I heard a voice saying, "Quick—quick!" I leaped from my bed, and hastening to the door, looked through the slit which I have before mentioned, and saw the girl's face. She addressed me thus—"You are very unfortunate! I wish to be of service to you. Don Juanito is in bed; answer quickly."

"My good girl, can you give me a paper and pencil?"

"Not at present; but," she added, looking back and leaving me for an instant, "here is some."

"Thanks; now give me a pin."

"She thrust her arm through the opening in the door, and I received the pin: she disappeared immediately. I knew not at first to whom to address my note, so fearful was I of implicating any of my friends. At last I remembered a cousin named Murfy, who held a subordinate situation in a government office, and to him I resolved to write. I then drew some blood from my arm, and wrote as follows:—"The ink with which this is written will give you some idea of the state to which I am reduced. I am surrounded with horrors, but no one shall suffer from my want of caution. Endeavour to see Don Facundo Infantes, a friend of mine; show him this paper, and act in concert with him. Farewell."

"I had just concluded these lines, when the jailer entered with my dinner. I hid the note under my pillow; and two days afterwards I found, in the same place, when I returned to my dungeon after it was cleaned, a pencil, some folded paper, and my watch pointing to eleven. I waited impatiently till this hour arrived, when my benefactress appeared.

"Are you better?" said she. "Don Juanito is ill, and Don Marcelino is going out: tell me what I can do for you?"

"Can you go out into the town?"

"Yes; I go every morning to market."

"Take this note then," said I, "to Don Jacobo Murfy, who lives in the street of Alcala. Show him this watch, on which my name is engraved, and do what he asks you."

"Is he a man of honour?" said she; "for you have many enemies."

"I assured her he was; and then fastened the watch and note to the end of the broom, which she thrust through the aperture in the door. "What is your name?" asked I.

"Ramona. This is my only name;" her voice changed, and she bade me farewell.

"On the following day I found a note and my watch under my pillow: the darkness unfortunately prevented my reading the former; I therefore spent this night, the last of the year, in fruitless conjectures. At length the 1st of January 1818 dawned, and I read the following note from my cousin:—"Nothing can equal my surprise on receiving your note; I will inform your friends of your situation. Be assured my affection for you will prompt me to strain every nerve for your rescue. Heaven preserve you! Adieu." I read these lines again and again, when the noise of doors opening announced some one's approach; and Don Marcelino entered, attired in his gala dress. I told him that I suffered much from pain in my chest. "Yes; the weather is cold," answered he; "you had better keep in bed;" and then withdrew.

"As soon as he was gone, I wrote a note to Infantes, begging him to write to Murcia and Granada, to assure my friends there that, whatever I might suffer, I would never betray them. I had just finished, when I heard Ramona's voice. She related to me the particulars of her visit to my cousin, adding that she had appointed him to meet her at a place nearer the prison, as he lived at some distance, and she was afraid of being missed by her master. "Have you any more notes for your friend? Don Juanito is ill, and my master is gone to the levee of the inquisitor-general."

"Have you been long in this prison?" said I.

"Ask no questions," said she; "I only wish to alleviate your misfortunes."

"Are there any more prisoners in these dungeons?"

"Yes; only one more, whom my master says will soon be set at liberty."

"What kind of man is he?" asked I, fearing that this might be Calvo, of whose arrest I had heard.

"He is young and handsome; he sings constantly, and has covered the walls with drawings."

"I knew that this could not be my treacherous servant. I asked who kept the keys of my dungeon; to which she answered, that sometimes her master, and at others Don Juanito; but that the former always laid them under his pillow at night; and though he allowed her to enter the passages, he never intrusted her with the keys, not even when she cleaned the dungeon; for he always accompanied her to unlock the door. She now withdrew, and was scarcely gone, when Don Marcelino arrived with some books, which he had brought for my use. On the 5th of January I received another visit from Ramona. She gave me some more paper and a pencil, and then said softly, "Tell me quickly if you want anything else: the prisoner who was confined in the passage above this has been removed to a dungeon close by; Don Juanito has left his room this morning, and is meddling as usual. Put your note under the pillow. Lest he should watch my visits here, it is better that you should write instead of speaking to me."

"Can you read well, for I have much to say? But if you are not willing to grant my request, pray do not raise my expectations."

"I will do all you require; my fears are all on your account."

"Between the paper she gave me I found a note from my friends, begging me to let them know if I would combine with them in devising some plan of escape; and adding that, if my plan failed, they would so far do

violence to their own feelings as to send me the means of self-destruction.

"My first idea was to consult Ramona, as I had but a confused recollection of the passages and staircases of the building; and without her help I dared not attempt to thread these, even should I be so fortunate as to escape beyond the doors of my cell. Dr Gil visited me the evening of this day, and said that no improvement could be expected in my health until I had a fire in my dungeon. He was evidently wearied with attending me, and begged me not to send for him unless I really wanted him.

"At the usual hour the next day Ramona reappeared. "I bring nothing for you to-day," said she; "Don Juanito seldom leaves his room, for he was worse after he went out the other day."

"I am glad to hear it, because I do not think it is safe for us to communicate by writing."

"How?" replied she; "do you think me indiscreet?"

"No," said I; "but will you bring me two pistols and some other things, which my friends will give you?"

"Are you mad?" cried she. "I have often heard my master say that you wished to destroy yourself. While I can serve you, why should you wish to die?"

"I assured her that I wanted these weapons only for my deliverance.

"How will you effect that?"

"Through the door; nothing is easier."

"You do not know the state of the prison," said she.

"I will tell you all that occurs; but you shall never have anything from me with which you can hurt yourself. I heard the physician tell my master last night that you were mad. My master said that he would rather have thirty prisoners than *the bird*, for that you had often deprived him of his sleep. The doctor said there was not a single person outside who ever thought of you."

"Ramona related this to show me that I was watched, even during the night. A noise in the passage now obliged her to quit her post. On the following day I received a visit from Don Juanito, who did not fail to behave as insolently as possible. Five days elapsed before I saw my messenger: on the sixth, on returning to my dungeon after it had been cleaned, I found a note from my friends, which I answered, begging them not to undertake any plan for my escape at present, as Ramona had excited my apprehensions respecting the suspicions of my jailers.

"On the night of the 15th, Don Marcelino told me that Castaneda, the senior inquisitor, wished to see me; that he would bring with him a person to whose wishes I certainly would attend. I asked whom. He answered, "Your father: yes, your father is coming to visit you."

"I knew the intention of this visit, which would be very painful to me; but I calmly answered that I should be very glad to see my respected father.

"The next day but one I heard Ramona's voice; she told me that Don Juanito had not left his room, there being no tribunal that day. I then painted to her, in the strongest colours, the situation in which I stood, declaring that I must escape or die.

"She burst into tears. "It is impossible; my master's death would be the consequence of your escape."

"You will go with me?" said I.

"No; I should then dishonour myself. Ask of me anything that will effect your escape; but wait for an opportunity, when the blame may be laid on Don Juanito. I will lose my life to save yours; but neither yours nor my master's blood must be spilled." In this wild manner she talked for some time, until the fear of discovery caused her to leave me.

"On the 19th I wrote a note, begging my friends to procure me the means of leaving Spain. I had meditated this journey without considering the state of weakness to which I was reduced; and had not my friends arranged matters more prudently, my scheme would have failed.

"Several days passed away; my keepers brought me

some more clothes for my bed, and also a brasier to warm the dungeon. At length Sunday arrived; and my jailers, wishing to profit by the holiday, visited me very early, and took away the brasier. Soon after, I heard Ramona.

"Don Juanito is gone out," said she; "but he is more vigilant than ever. Since he was ill, he has never entered the prison till last night, when he stood reading at the top of the first staircase. I have twice followed my master's steps: he does not shut the doors after him; but the whole prison remains in darkness, as, except the light which he gives to the other prisoner, there is not one to be seen. The key of the third door goes badly; it has been made since you came here. I heard him talking with Don Juanito about you. That fool told him that he should read the book he had got, about a bird as wicked as you, who escaped from a dungeon in the country of an heretic king, who had no Inquisition, and consequently no good jailers."

"I immediately guessed that this book must be Baron Trenck's memoirs, and related some part of his history to her, and thus endeavoured to engage her in a conversation so interesting to me; but she hastily quitted me; and scarcely two minutes had elapsed, before Don Juanito appeared.

"I found afterwards that Ramona had a little dog, which was so much attached to her, that he followed her wherever she went. She always left him, when she came to visit me, outside the first door of the prison; so that, whenever any one opened it, he ran to his mistress, and thus gave warning of the approach of the person entering, whom it was easy for her to avoid in the darkness of the passages.

"The next day I found under my pillow a plan of the streets in the vicinity of the prison; and I wrote to my friends, saying that I should attempt my escape about the 30th of the month, between seven and eight in the evening; and added a description of the dress which I wore. I laid these under the pillow. I did not see Ramona until the 28th, when she only stayed a few minutes. I grew daily more anxious and restless; and at length, on the Sunday afternoon, at three o'clock, Ramona delivered to me a note.

"I have been obliged to assign more than one pretext in order to induce my master to allow me free entrance into the prison this afternoon," said she. "I tremble at what you purpose doing to-morrow."

"Purpose doing!" said I; "I will do it."

"Wait till Juanito is ill again," said she. "I formerly feared for my master's life; I fear now for yours. Juanito has never lately missed his nocturnal visit to the prison. You would meet with both, and would be ruined."

"She burst into tears, and leaning her head against the door, sobbed aloud. I begged her to accompany me; but she still firmly refused, adding that she would aid me in all my plans for escape.

"If I remain," said she, "no blame can be attached to me; if I fly, I convict myself at once."

"She then informed me that, when Don Marcelino visited the prison alone, he did not shut any of the doors after him; and that very probably Juanito would not accompany him to-night, or to-morrow either.

"If," said she, "the plate on which Marcelino brings the glass containing your medicine have a border on it, be sure that Don Juanito is watching outside; if it have no border, all is safe."

"She retired, and I read the note she gave me; it assured me that a friend would wait for me every night from seven o'clock outside the doors of the Inquisition; and referring to the plan, informed me of the course I ought to pursue through the streets.

"To-morrow," said I, "I shall be at liberty, or shall die."

"The next day dawned, and Don Marcelino visited me, and ordered me to exchange my tattered jacket for a green surcoat, as the time of the intended visit was approaching. This alteration in my dress annoyed me,

as I was afraid that my friends would not recognise me thus. My dungeon was cleaned at noon, and on looking under the pillow, I found a small gold cross, and the same ear-ring which had at first inspired me with hope, both fastened to a hair-chain. I then took a piece of charcoal from the brasier, and wrote in the blank leaf of one of Don Marcelino's books a few lines, stating "that my situation left me no alternative but to seek my liberty by forcible means; and that, should my attempt be fruitless, I begged him to respect my misfortunes, and show me more mercy if I again should be placed under his custody."

"At length the hour for the execution of my plan drew near. I heard the noise of bolts, and presently Don Marcelino entered. Without recollecting the sign agreed upon respecting the plate, and fearing this might be my last opportunity, I extinguished the light, advanced towards my jailer, and pushed him violently to the farther end of the dungeon; then rushing to the door, opened it, closed it quickly, drew the bolt, and stood in the dark passage. I opened the third door, and groped my way through several passages till I reached the staircase, which I ascended. I found myself on the threshold of a kitchen, and went in to seek a hatchet, or some weapon of defence. The first object that met my eyes was Ramona, pale and breathless.

"Where is my master?" said she. "What pistol is that in your hand?"

"I showed her that what she imagined to be a pistol was a key. She drew from her bosom the notes I had previously given her, gave them to me, and pointing to a court which led to the outer door, said, "That is the way to the street. My mistress expects some friends this evening; they will come directly; for Heaven's sake hasten away."

"She pressed my hands, and I hurried to the court.

"It was quite dark, but I contrived to reach the door. Just as I did so, I heard voices outside. Ramona, who ought to have opened the door, began screaming as if hurt; those outside screamed also; and in this confusion I opened the door, and rushed out, throwing down the person who was entering. I was now in the street, and breathed a second life.

"Following the direction pointed out by my friends, I turned the corner of the building, and saw a tall man muffled up in a cloak, who exclaimed immediately, "Juan Van Halen! is it you?"

"Yes," cried I. He then whistled, and several friends joined us. My old cap was exchanged for a laced cocked-hat, and a cloak was thrown over me. We then set forth. My friends gradually dispersed, leaving only two with me. On arriving at the street Tudescos, we stopped at the entrance of a large house, the principal door of which was open. Having entered, we met on the staircase a large masquerading party, who were coming out of the principal rooms. We continued ascending the stairs till we reached the humble attic, which was the asylum prepared for me by my friends."

Meanwhile all was dismay at the prison. Don Marcelino's wife, alarmed at Ramona's screams, and the rough treatment her guest had experienced, hastened, regardless of all danger, and guided by the heroic girl, to the dungeons. As she went along the passages she called her husband's name, and fainted away when she found the door of Van Halen's cell locked. Juanito at this moment entered the prison, and ordered them to force the door of the dungeon, when they found Don Marcelino lying on the floor in a swoon. Intelligence of the escape was immediately carried to the inquisitor-general; and, by a curious coincidence, Van Halen's mother, who had not yet heard of his flight, presented herself a few hours after to plead for her son's pardon. To her astonishment she was told that he had fled.

It was agreed that Van Halen should remain in Madrid until he had recovered his health: he was accordingly placed under the care of the Biscayan woman to whom the secret of his concealment was intrusted. This individual nursed him very kindly, and never in

the least degree attempted to betray him. Meanwhile the report was spread by his friends that he had left Madrid; and to strengthen this idea, he wrote a letter to the inquisitor-general, dated it Bordeaux, and then sent it to a friend at that city, who posted it there. This quite misled the Inquisition.

Van Halen now ventured to go out at night; and one evening, passing before his father's house, he saw his mother and sisters sitting at work near the balcony, whilst several men, wrapped in cloaks, were stationed opposite the windows, and evidently watching their movements. Various adventures befell our hero during these moonlight walks; but he happily escaped all dangers; and when the spring arrived, he determined to leave Madrid for France.

A passport, designating him as a public commissioner, was, after much difficulty, obtained, without exciting suspicion; and Van Halen bade his brothers, who had been made acquainted with the whole affair, adieu, and set out with his faithful friend Polo for the frontier. Nothing remarkable occurred on their journey till they reached the city of Ollite, in the kingdom of Navarre. Here, on entering the kitchen of the inn, they found a capuchin friar and a priest, who displayed the hateful badge of the holy office. This was sufficiently alarming; but the evening passed off without any discovery being made. The next morning they started on their journey before the rest of the travellers were astir, and hastened to an inn which was only one day's march from the frontier.

Van Halen's friends had intrusted the landlord of this inn with the secret of his flight, and having given him the watchword, they asked for advice respecting the crossing of the Pyrenees. He advised them to travel under the protection of some smugglers who were going, and who would open a path through the snow; he added, that their sudden arrival had excited the suspicions of a notary, who was in the kitchen; on hearing which, Polo went to that room, and taking out his pocket-book, began to look over some papers, dropping, as if accidentally, the passport, and then left the kitchen. The host, who was in the secret, picked it up, and asked the notary to read it aloud, which he did, and this stilled their suspicions. Van Halen dared not trust to the guidance of the smugglers, and he and Polo started alone for the mountains, trusting to chance for their road, and for escaping the queries of the custom-house officers. As they approached the frontier, one of the guards, who was on the look-out, came up and demanded their passport; they delivered it, and dismounting, led their horses as near to the barrier as possible. For fifteen minutes they were kept in suspense, the officers looking suspiciously at them. Polo lighted a cigar, and began a conversation with one, but could obtain only monosyllabic answers.

Meantime they were repeatedly invited to go into the house; but they declined, at the same time taking care to show no signs of alarm. At length the officer came out, saying that their personal appearance so completely agreed with the passport, that he did not require any time to consider; but that he had had an order from the viceroy of Navarre, desiring him not to credit any passport that was not countersigned by his lordship. Van Halen answered that the exalted rank of the minister who had signed his, entitled him to respect. The officer returned the passport, ordered the gates of the barrier to be opened, and bade them farewell. They rode slowly until out of sight of the officers; and being sure that they were safe in the French territory, they alighted and embraced each other. Van Halen then threw off the insignia of his assumed rank of public commissioner, and dropped the name of Manuel Suelto, under which he had travelled through Spain.

The two friends were now transformed into wool merchants, and as such passed the custom-house. It was so customary for merchants to travel armed, that their pistols and swords did not attract any attention. They then hastened to Paris, and thence to Calais,

where they embarked for England, in order to obtain an asylum in that country, which is always open to all in distress. Here, properly, the narrative of Van Halen's adventures ought to end; but he played so important a part in another country some years afterwards, that we cannot resist the temptation of saying a few words more about him. We will first, however, acquaint our readers with the remainder of Ramona's history, as we are sure that they must be interested about so generous a character.

After Van Halen's escape from the Inquisition, both Ramona and Don Marcelino were examined, and placed in separate dungeons: all communication between the latter and his wife was forbidden; and Don Juanito was appointed to the post of seeing these injunctions fulfilled. The tribunal then accused Don Marcelino of not having acted with sufficient strictness towards Van Halen, and Ramona was charged with having opened the door of the prison communicating with the jailers' apartments, her master having declared that he shut them when he carried the medicine to his prisoner. Don Marcelino was condemned to the galleys for ten years, and Ramona to perpetual seclusion in a convent. This girl was, however, for some time in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and bore all her miseries with unshaken fortitude. She remained in the convent till 1820, when the political events in Spain restored her to liberty. She then married a soldier of cuirassiers, to whom she had for many years been attached. She seems to have been very humble and disinterested in her generosity, for she never asked for the slightest reward, either from the government or from any individual; and when Van Halen returned to Spain, he showed her all the kindness which gratitude for her services prompted; but she never sought in any way to raise her condition, and lived a happy and a humble life. Don Marcelino received, some years after, a situation under government; Don Juanito enlisted in a company of grenadiers; and though still wearing the badge of that office which had been overthrown with so much exultation by the people, assumed the uniform of the national militia, and was killed, while forcing an entrance into the king's palace, on the 7th of July 1822. He died expressing sorrow for his misdeeds; and we must hope that his repentance was sincere.

To return to Van Halen. His friend Polo left him as soon as he was safely settled in London, and returned to Spain. Van Halen remained some months in England; and at last, being driven by poverty to find some means of subsistence, determined to enter the army of Russia. He remained in the Russian service until the revolutions of the year 1820 rendered his return to his native country quite free from danger. He then intimated his wish to retire from the army; but the Emperor Alexander—a true despot—being displeased at the attempt made by the Spaniards to throw off the yoke which for six long years had held them in bondage, and reduced them to the same state of degradation as the Russian serfs had sunk into, gave orders that Van Halen should be dismissed from the service, and quit the Russian dominions under an escort, which should be provided for the purpose. And this order was given just after Van Halen had been planting the standard of Russia on the towers of the emperor's enemies in Georgia!

Van Halen journeyed immediately into Austria, thence through Switzerland and France, and arrived in Spain, where, in a few days after, he had the inexpressible joy of being once more in the bosom of his family.

Soon after this he married, and was sent with the far-famed General Mina to quell the rebellion in Catalonia. He shared the fate of this chief after the capitulation of Barcelona, and left Spain for the western world. In 1826 he returned to Europe, and settled in the Netherlands. Here he became acquainted with some of the warmest advocates of Belgic freedom; and being in Brussels during the Revolution of 1830, he placed himself at the head of the people, and led them against the Dutch troops during the fight of the four

days. He was then made inspector of the fortresses, and also lieutenant-general—but here we will leave him, merely mentioning a curious fact; namely, that the steam-packet which brought to England the first intelligence of the Belgian revolution was named the *Ramona*.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

TELEGRAPHS on the electric principle are now in rapid construction along all our main lines of railway; in fact, the time is at hand when they will be regarded as indispensable as the rails themselves. Nor is it in Britain alone that this gratifying progress is discernible. France is equally on the alert, and her savans are unremitting in their endeavours to extend the capabilities of these wonderful instruments. The same remark is applicable to Austria and other continental countries, and in particular to the United States, where Professor Morse, the inventor of a new signal apparatus, capable of performing sixty signs a-minute, has been charged with the construction of several lines of telegraph, covering an extent of three hundred leagues. More than this, seas of moderate width will ere long be traversed by those magic wires as effectually as the most sheltered nook of land. We observe that the Admiralty, with a view of testing the practicability of conducting a submarine telegraph across the English Channel, have approved of, and given leave to, the projectors to lay down an experimental wire across Portsmouth harbour, from the admiral's house in the dockyard to the Gosport railway terminus. When this experiment has been sufficiently tested—and there seems to be no doubt whatever of its perfect practicability—then both the English and French governments will give their sanction to the projected line across the Straits of Dover. From Calais it is intended to continue the line to Paris, and from Paris to Marseilles. Upon the completion and success of these projects, a line on a still more gigantic scale, it is stated, will then be attempted by the French government; namely, that of connecting the shores of Africa with those of Europe, thus opening a direct and lightning-like communication between Marseilles and Algeria!

All this is highly gratifying, not only on economical, but on moral and social considerations. By and by these lines will be used not merely by railway companies in conveying their own directions, nor by government in transmitting important intelligence, but they will be employed by private individuals, by friends, by members of the same family, as a sort of extraordinary post in cases of emergency. How delightful, for instance, to learn, even by one day's anticipation of the ordinary post, that the long absent friend has safely arrived from abroad! How gratifying to know, morning and evening, the condition of a distressed relative who may be four or five hundred miles distant! In matters of business too, it will be of infinite advantage; the most perfect secrecy being obtainable by making the officials connected with the telegraph transmit certain ciphers known only to the parties communicating. Moreover, it will afford one of the most thorough means of detection, as has already been proved in several cases of theft. Let a bank robbery be committed in Edinburgh, for example, during the night, and next morning, by ten o'clock, the intelligence, with its particulars, may be communicated to the bankers of Glasgow, Liverpool, London, and every other town between which the telegraphic wires may be suspended. In fact, by means of this and railway and steamboat communication, the escape of culprits, which is every day becoming

less practicable, will soon be rendered next to impossible—a fact which will tend powerfully to lessen the amount of crime; the certainty of detection being one of the most potent means of prevention. And, taking still more general ground, it will be the means of uniting countries in closer friendship and friendly regard—bringing them, in many of their most important transactions, as it were together—placing them, as regards time and distance at least, on the same exchange, and in the same council chamber; and it will develop reciprocal feelings, which have now scarcely existence. Once in the enjoyment of such privileges, it will not be a slight matter that will lead to any disruption; for there is nothing more certain than that the tendency to war becomes always less in proportion to a nation's experience of the advantages of peace. What a wonderful chapter in the world's history may yet be founded on the fact of the instantaneous transmissibility of the electric fluid along a metallic wire!

BATHING AND DROWNING.

Every summer brings its catalogue of 'drowned while bathing,' but we think the present season has been unusually rife in these melancholy casualties. Scarcely a newspaper we take up but contains some such record; 'having gone beyond his depth'—'took cramp'—'heroically leapt in to save a drowning companion, but being no swimmer'—or the like, being invariably the reason assigned for the catastrophe. Frequent as these droppings away of human life have become, yet year after year passes by without any really adequate means being taken to prevent them. It is true that, at some of the larger ports, the commissioners or a humane society may have provided a couple of life-buoys; but these ports are seldom the resort of bathers, and we are not aware of any such provision at the little outports and sheltered nooks which usually form the bathing grounds of the country. Useful and necessary as we admit such apparatus to be, yet though every maritime hamlet were provided with them, they would go but a little way in preventing the evil to which we refer. What we require is proper bathing-places—places prepared and set aside for that purpose—of moderate depth, and so sheltered and secured, that a woman or a child would be in no danger of drowning. It will not do to tell us, as is sometimes inconsiderately done, 'Oh, if swimming were more commonly taught and practised, there would be fewer cases of drowning.' The truth is, that, among a people circumstanced as we are, swimming could never be very generally practised, even had we the perpetual summer of the tropics; and far less can it be acquired, seeing that for nine months in the year the severity of the climate forbids its enjoyment. Fifteen years ago, the writer of this note would have yielded to none in the exercise of swimming; but, from dwelling inland, from the calls of business, and the like, he has had no means of keeping it in practice, and now feels almost as much disqualified as though he never breasted the water. Thousands must feel themselves in the same predicament; not to say anything of those whose inland dwelling prevents them from ever acquiring the art.

All that is aimed at and required by our people—whether maritime or inland—is a few weeks of healthful bathing in the open air; and the question should be, how is this to be obtained with the greatest comfort and safety? Undoubtedly by the preparation of proper bathing-grounds, whether on our shores or on our inland rivers. Where a corporation exists, this might be done by such a body for the common good; in much-frequented watering-places, the proprietors would find it their interest to provide such accommodation for their visitors; and where none of these means can be secured, it might become a subject of private speculation, as most parties would pay a trifling fee rather than run the risk of discomfort and danger. Public gardens, parks, recreation grounds, and baths, are now quite the rage; why not safe and comfortable situations for one of the most

healthful of all recreations—bathing in the open air? On most of our beaches a shallow space could be netted or railed in at a very small expense, and such netting, being carefully removed after summer, might be made to last for several seasons. Such a space could be subdivided, and even partially protected by an awning, so that parties might, for a trifling charge, enjoy all the seclusion of a private bath. It is true that individuals could not be prevented from taking the open sea; but the generality of females, the aged and infirm, the cautious, and those in charge of children, would assuredly prefer such places of safety. So long as the present system of unconcern prevails, there will be grievous losses and bereavements; rash and inexperienced youths will venture beyond their depth; and chills, spasms, and cramps will unaccountably seize the most robust and experienced. We would not, by any means, discard the boats and buoys now in use; on the contrary, we would rather multiply than diminish. What we contend for, in addition, is the laying out of proper areas, which would be perfectly safe even for the least experienced, and which, moreover, could be kept more secluded, more cleanly, and more comfortable.

BURNING OF WATER.

It was once remarked by a celebrated chemist, when speaking of the probable exhaustion of our coal-fields, that he had little fear for that event, as long ere then the progress of science would have enabled man to support the combustion of water. Extravagant as this opinion may appear to the unscientific, there is nothing more likely. Water is a compound of oxygen and hydrogen—two gases without which it would be impossible to eliminate a single phenomenon of combustion. Thus the gas which we burn in our houses is carburetted hydrogen; that is, a compound of carbon and hydrogen, which, on ignition, gives us light and heat only when in a medium containing oxygen—such as the atmosphere. Here, then, hydrogen and oxygen play most important parts; and could we resolve water into its elements, which it is quite possible to do, all that is necessary to produce heat and light is a little carbon. But we are not left to speculate on this matter; the thing has been so far done by M. Jobard; and gas made from water, possessing double the illuminating properties of ordinary coal gas, has been used both in France and in our own country. M. Jobard obtains his hydrogen gas by the decomposition of steam in vertical retorts filled with incandescent coke, and unites this gas, at the moment of formation, with hyper-carburetted gas, produced by the distillation of any hydro-carburet—as oil, tar, naphthaline, and other products at present rejected by our ordinary gas-works. It is of no moment whence his hydro-carburets are produced; indeed the substances which are rendered useless and injurious to the manufacture of the gas, by the present mode of operating, are precisely those which are the richest in illuminating properties. M. Jobard's process and its details have been submitted, since its invention in 1833, to several commissions of inquiry both in Belgium and France, and the reports of these have been uniformly favourable both as to its cheapness and the higher illuminating power of the gas so produced. In a recent number of the 'Bulletin du Musée d'Industrie,' the inventor gives a full account of his process, which is about to become public property; and mentions that it has been used in a manufactory near St Etienne, in Dijon and Strasburg, partially in Lyons and Paris, and by private individuals in Dublin and London. He modestly concludes his paper by observing, that he will not be accused of exaggeration when he states 'that there is some value in a process, the principle of which is to decompose water, a substance of no value, by means of coke, which is of very little value—as under this process one pound of oil, which costs a halfpenny, will supply a burner giving a light equal to ten candles during twenty hours.'

M. Jobard's is certainly a discovery of great interest,

and though not the complete combustion of water predicted by Sir Humphry Davy, is at all events, as every one must admit, an important step in the right direction.

THE LAST NUMBER OF THE FOREIGN QUARTERLY

CONTAINS a fair show of articles, though, it strikes us, less exclusively in reference to foreign matters than formerly. The leading paper is a pleasant and amusing one upon Captain Stokes's Australian voyages. It appears that this expedition has been the means of adding immensely to our knowledge of Australian geography, though in many places the progress of scientific discovery has been anticipated by squatters—solitary pioneers of civilisation, who have established themselves for years in unmapped regions. Of this kind of population there is a vast quantity in and about Australia, particularly about Bass's Strait. The following is the reviewer's account of

THE STRAITSMEN.

'About the beginning of this century the south coast of Australia was much frequented by sealing vessels, which flocked thither to take advantage of the discoveries of Bass and Flinders, and to ply their profitable but precarious trades on islands, many of which had never before been visited by man; for the natives of Australia and Tasmania never crossed to them—at least to those which did not hold out the promise of a fertile soil. For some time the vessels engaged in sealing made large gains; but the supply did not equal the demand. It is in the nature of this occupation to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Animals sought after only for their skins soon diminish in number. Accordingly, many of the crews of the vessels, becoming attached to the spots they were in the habit of visiting, and finding, too, that it was scarcely worth while, with the small profit they made, to return to a civilised country, determined to remain and establish themselves. In lieu of pay, they generally took a boat and some stores; and, bidding farewell to their comrades, took up their abode in their favourite islands. They soon found it necessary to disperse in small parties; each station only affording subsistence to one or two; and they seem, besides, to have been fond of a comparatively solitary life. Intrepid seamen, they spent their days upon the water, and returned at night to sleep in rude little huts which they erected under the shadow of some crag, or in some narrow valley where protection was afforded from the wind.

'It was not long before these wild dwellings became invested with all the charms of home. Gardens, well stocked with vegetables, gradually grew up around them; and these rough and uncouth beings delighted, too, in surrounding themselves with the flowers which they remembered to have loved when young. Many a rude imitation of an English homestead grew up, accordingly, in those storm-beat isles; and passing ships have beheld, as they were driven along by the fury of a tornado, brief glimpses of cottages that reminded them of the land they had last quitted, with doors and windows shaded by the honeysuckle or the rose.

'The above account of the origin of the straitsmen is true with reference to many of the older men and their families; but it is well known that these islands of Bass's Strait have afforded a refuge to many of the convicts who from time to time escaped from the gangs of Tasmania. Mingling with the wild and somewhat lawless inhabitants of this region, they easily escape pursuit, and are thus enabled, if they please, to spend the remainder of their days in peace.

'It is now time that we should explain the use of the word families, which we have used in reference to these straitsmen. They have all got one or more partners of their existence. Polygamy with them is in high honour. The man who has most wives is held in most respect, because wives and wealth are synonymous terms. The straitsmen have made it their practice to beg, buy, borrow, or steal their better halves from the tribes of the continent in Tasmania. A few seals have often procured as many women; but in cases where no disposition for barter was exhibited, force has been resorted to, and the black-eyed and black-skinned damsels have been appropriated without the consent of their parents and guardians. At

first, the companions thus acquired were not treated very gently; but by degrees an affection, based partly on interest, was engendered. It was found that these women might be of great assistance. They caught wallaby; assisted their lords and masters in managing their boats; in short, made themselves generally useful. Some of the straitlaced were actually enabled to dispense entirely with the assistance of white companions, and lived alone with their harems, on separate islands, in solitary grandeur.

The new population thus created, which appears destined at a future period to overcome and occupy the whole of the islands, is exceedingly curious. They are, without exception, vigorous and clean-limbed, with a dark ruddy complexion, and very fine eyes and teeth. They excel in all the qualifications of their fathers, make excellent headmen in whalers, and will, probably, constitute a splendid nursery for seamen, in case any maritime power should rise in the southern hemisphere. Even already they prove of great service to shipping, furnishing vessels with supernumerary hands, and filling up places left vacant by accident or desertion.

It is very pleasing to find that their children are not allowed to run entirely wild. Their fathers give them a rude but useful education; many can read and write; and we are told that the elementary principles of Christianity are early infused into their minds. But when our author alleges that none of the native superstitions, which might interfere with the purity of their belief, are transmitted to them, we confess our inability to believe so strange a statement without further inquiry. The paramount influence of the mother in moulding the mind of her child is notorious. No education sinks so deeply, or abides so imperishably, as that which is unconsciously imbibed with a mother's milk. Now, these Tasmanian women, in spite of the influence of their husbands, all retain a firm hold of many of the extraordinary notions prevalent among their people. The most remarkable of these is the doctrine of the transmigration of aboriginal souls into the bodies of white men. Nothing will induce them to abandon this idea. They cherish it fondly, and resist tenaciously any endeavour to deprive them of it, as an attempt upon their happiness.

Our reviewer also presents one or two curious traits of the population at Sydney. The following cannot fail to amuse our readers:—

THE 'GOVERNMENT CLASS' AT SYDNEY.

'It may be worth while here, suppressing names and dates, to give an instance of the feeling which exists among what are called the "free," in opposition to the "government" classes, now emancipated, and possessing the same political rights and privileges with the others. Several attempts have been made to conclude a treaty of alliance between them, but in vain. All endeavours hitherto have failed before the invincible prejudice of hereditary virtue; and there seems every possibility of the permanent existence of a class which thanks God it is not as its neighbours are—sons and daughters of publicans and sinners. The prejudices entertained against the black natives have been partially overcome, by a matrimonial alliance at Swan River. It was thought, therefore, that if a marriage between persons of a distinguished position, one of them being of convict descent, were brought about, a great step would have been taken. A couple answering this description existed. The accomplished and beautiful daughter of a man of wealth, who had been one of the compulsory founders of the state, was betrothed to a young man glorying in all the pride of honest blood. The marriage took place; the bride was given away by the governor of the colony. The public looked on in seeming approval; and as soon as the reluctance of the young wife to appear in public was overcome, she entered, leaning on the arm of her husband, a ball-room filled with all the rank and fashion of Sydney. A titter ran round; there was shaking of fans, and rustling of gowns, and exchanging of glances, and tossing of heads, and whisperings. Suddenly every kind and charitable lady rose from her seat, the dance was broken up, and in a few minutes all the rank and fashion of Sydney had disappeared; and even the hostess, who had magnanimously issued the invitation, awed by this expression of public opinion, dared scarcely advance to console the confounded and weeping cause of all this confusion!

Another instance will exhibit the state of feeling among the reprobates themselves. They have been taught to caricature the feelings of the free. Because these will

not associate with the descendants of rogues, those will not associate with any who are not descendants of rogues. A public dinner was given by this class, to which the doctor who took care of their bodily health was invited. Great was the joviality among these sinners, and toasts of all kinds were drunk. Our medical friend got on his legs, to answer for his profession; when suddenly a man arose, whose claims to Newgate descent were undoubted, and insisted that, because the son of *Æsculapius* was a *white sheep*, he could not be heard. No sooner was this hint given, than divers significant glances were cast on the worthy doctor, who stood almost overwhelmed by the imputation. At length, mustering courage, he repelled the charge "of his honourable friend," denied the purity of his descent, and, for fear of falling a victim to the "exclusive dealing" system, actually proved, by a long genealogical deduction, his relationship with some notorious convicts.

SELF-CULTURE.

[The following paper is an abridgment of Channing's essay on the same subject—slightly simplified in language, and with one new passage, marked by brackets. The public will be the more satisfied with it, on learning that it was put into its present form by a young married lady of the county of Sussex, with a view to circulation amongst the labourers on her husband's estate.]

I AM going to address those who gain a livelihood by the labour of their hands, from whose industry and skill I derive almost all the comforts of life. I wish to express my sense of obligation to them, and my sympathy with this large portion of my fellow-creatures; and I wish to encourage them to the duty of self-culture—a duty which every man owes to himself. I will first explain what I mean by self-culture. To cultivate a plant is to make it grow. Nothing admits of culture except that which has life in it. He who unfolds all the powers of his mind, and all the good feelings of his heart, so as to become a wise and good being, practises self-culture. Another word for self-culture is self-education.

I am aware that there is a common notion that the mass of the people need no other education than is necessary to fit them for their various trades and occupations. But a man is to be educated because he is a man; not because he is to make shoes, nails, or pins, or because he has to labour in the fields. A trade is plainly not the great end of his being; for his mind cannot be shut up in it, his force of thought cannot be exhausted on it. Men of all conditions are placed in circumstances which give rise to the highest virtues, and demand great powers of mind. The labourer is not a mere labourer: he has close, tender, responsible connexions with God and his fellow-creatures; he is a son, husband, father, friend, and Christian; he belongs to a home, a country, a church, and a race. And is such a man to be educated *only* for a trade? Was he not sent into the world for the great work of improving himself? Is not the greatest work on earth, the education of his children, committed to him by God? In these remarks I do not mean to recommend to the labourer indifference to his outward lot. Undoubtedly a man is to perfect himself in his trade, for by it he is to earn his bread. But bread is not his highest good; for if it were, his lot would be harder than that of the brutes, whom nature feeds and clothes without any care of their own. If a man knows no higher use of his mind than to drudge for his body, his case is desperate as far as education is concerned.

Still, I hold it important that every man, in every class, should possess the means of health, of comfort in food and clothing, and of occasional retirement and leisure. These are good in themselves; they are to be sought for their own sakes; and, still more, they are important means of self-education. A clean, comfortable dwelling, with wholesome meals, is no small assistance to the improvement of the morals and the understanding. A man living in a damp, cold, or dirty dwelling, and striving, without success, to appease his hunger on scanty and unwholesome food, is in danger of falling into in-

difference and recklessness. Multiply comforts, then, as much as you can by honourable means—only do not sacrifice for them better and greater things.

Labour may be one great means of education, and this every man may find in his condition or occupation, be it what it may. If he strive to do his whole work faithfully—to be honest, not because 'honesty is the best policy,' but for the sake of justice, and that he may do good to others—he is making his daily labour a means of improving and perfecting his nature. It is strange that labouring men do not think more of the vast usefulness of their toils, and take a benevolent pleasure in them on this account. A man, to support himself, must serve others; he must do or produce something for their comfort or gratification. Now, this usefulness ought to be an end in his labour, as truly as to earn his living. He ought to think of the benefit of those he works for, as well as of his own; and in so doing, in desiring, amidst his sweat and toil, to serve others as well as himself, he is exercising and growing in benevolence as truly as if he were distributing bounty with a large hand to the poor. Such a motive makes the commonest pursuit holy. It is by thus interweaving goodness with common labours that we give virtue strength, and make it a habit of the soul.

One of the chief means of self-education is intercourse with superior minds; and this we can enjoy chiefly through books. In the best books, wise men talk to us. God be thanked for books! They are the voice of the distant and the dead. They give to all who will use them properly the society of the best and the wisest of our race.

To make this means of education effectual, a man must choose good books; such as have been written by right-minded and strong-minded men; and these works must not only be skimmed over for amusement, but read with attention. In choosing books, we may be assisted by those who have studied more than ourselves; but a great deal must depend upon our natural tastes.

I know how hard it is to some men (especially to those who spend much time in fatiguing bodily labour) to fix their attention on books. Let them strive to overcome this difficulty by choosing subjects of deep interest, or by reading in company with those whom they love. Nothing can supply the place of books. They are cheering or soothing companions in solitude, illness, affliction. Let every man, if possible, gather some good books under his roof. Almost any luxury should be sacrificed to this.

But, it will be asked, how can the labouring classes find time for reading? I answer, that an earnest purpose finds time, or makes time. It seizes on spare moments, and turns larger fragments of leisure to good account. A man who follows his calling with industry and spirit, and uses his earnings economically, will always have some portion of the day at command; and it is astonishing how fruitful of improvement a short season becomes when eagerly seized and faithfully used. It has often been observed, that they who have most time at their disposal profit by it least. A single hour in the day, steadily given to the study of an interesting subject, brings unexpected accumulations of knowledge. Then winter brings leisure to the husbandman, and winter evenings to many labourers in the city. Above all, in Christian countries, the seventh day is released from toil. The seventh part of the year—no small portion of existence—may be given by almost every one to the cultivation of the mind.

But some will say, 'Be it granted that the working-classes may find some leisure; should they not be allowed to spend it in amusement? Is it not cruel to summon them from toils of the hand to toils of the mind? They have earned pleasure by the day's toil, and ought to partake it.' Yes, let them have pleasure. Far be it from me to prevent them refreshing themselves after life's labours. But I maintain that reading multiplies and increases their pleasures; that it creates new capacities of enjoyment; that it saves their leisure

from being, what it too often is, dull and wearisome; that it saves them from rushing for excitement to indulgences destructive to body and soul. It is one of the great benefits of self-improvement that it raises a people above the enjoyments of the brute, to give them pleasures worthy of men. In consequence of the present intellectual culture of our country, a vast mass of enjoyment is given to men, women, and children of all ranks by books; an enjoyment unknown in former times. At this moment numbers of gifted writers are employed in multiplying entertaining works. Sir Walter Scott, a name well known among the greatest of his day, has given us tales of fiction which have taken their place among the delights of all civilised nations. How many millions have been chained to his pages! How many melancholy spirits have he steeped in forgetfulness of their cares and sorrows! What multitudes, wearied by their day's work, have owed some bright evening hours and pleasant sleep to his delightful stories! And not only do fictions give pleasure. In proportion as the mind is cultivated, it takes delight in history, in descriptions of nature, in travels, in poetry, and even graver works. Is the labourer, then, deprived of pleasure by education? Let me only add, that in proportion as education spreads among a people, the cheapest and commonest of all pleasures—conversation—increases in delight. This, after all, is the great amusement of life—cheering us round our hearths, and often cheering our work. This source of pleasure is often lost to men of all classes for want of knowledge, activity of mind, and refinement of feeling. And do we deprive the labourer of his pleasure by recommending to him improvements which will place the daily, hourly blessings of conversation within his reach?

As I wish to raise no unreasonable hopes, I must make one remark on the subject of education. Though, by faithfully endeavouring to strengthen his mind by thought and reading, every man, of whatever age, will be richly rewarded, he must not expect to enjoy the fruits of his labours so thoroughly if his early education has not prepared his mind for future improvement. They whose childhood has been neglected, though they may make progress in future life, can hardly repair the loss of their first years. I say this that we may be all excited to save our children from this loss, and that we may prepare them, as far as is in our power, for an effectual use of all the means of self-education which a ripper age may bring with it. [Do not neglect to send your children to school, for the sake of any weekly addition to your earnings which their labour might produce. They have been committed to your charge by God, and you will have one day to answer at his judgment seat if you have in anyway neglected the improvement of their hearts and minds.]

I conclude with recalling to you the happiest feature of our age; and that is, the progress of the mass of the people in intelligence, self-respect, and all the comforts of life. What a contrast does the present form with past times! Let us thank God for what has been gained, but let us feel that we have only started in the race. How much remains to be done! What a vast amount of ignorance, drunkenness, coarseness, sensuality, may still be found in our community! What a vast amount of mind is lost! When we think that every house might be cheered by intelligence, unselfishness, and refinement, and then remember in how many houses the higher powers and affections of human nature are buried as in tombs, what a darkness gathers over society! And how few of us are moved by this moral desolation! How few understand that, to raise the depressed, by a wise education, to the dignity of men, is the highest end of the social state! Shame on us that the worth of a fellow-creature is so little felt! I would that I could speak with an awakening voice to the people of their wants, their privileges, their responsibilities. I would say to them, Your nature is too great to be crushed; you were not created merely to toil, eat, drink, and sleep, like the brutes. If you will, you can

rise. No power in society, no hardship in your condition, can depress you and keep you down in knowledge, power, and virtue, but by your own consent. Awake!—resolve earnestly on self-education. Make yourselves worthy of your country and your religion, and strengthen them by your intelligence and your virtues!

SLIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES.

Sir Walter Scott, walking one day along the banks of the Yarrow, where Mungo Park was born, saw the traveller throwing stones into the water, and anxiously watching the bubbles that succeeded. Scott inquired the object of his occupation. 'I was thinking,' answered Park, 'how often I had thus tried to sound the rivers in Africa, by calculating how long a time had elapsed before the bubbles rose to the surface.' It was a slight circumstance, but the traveller's safety frequently depended upon it. In a watch, the mainspring forms a small portion of the works, but it impels and governs the whole. So it is in the machinery of human life—a slight circumstance is permitted by the Divine Ruler to derange or to alter it: a giant falls by a pebble; a girl at the door of an inn changes the fortune of an empire. If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, said Pascal in his epigrammatic and brilliant manner, the condition of the world would have been different. The Mohammedans have a tradition, that when their prophet concealed himself in Mount Shur, his pursuers were deceived by a spider's web, which covered the mouth of the cave. Luther might have been a lawyer, had his friend and companion escaped the thunder storm at Erfurt; Scotland had wanted her stern reformer, if the appeal of the preacher had not startled him in the chapel of St Andrew's castle; and if Mr Grenville had not carried, in 1746, his memorable resolution as to the expediency of charging 'certain stamp duties' on the plantations in America, the western world might still have bowed to the British sceptre. Cowley might never have been a poet, if he had not found the Faery Queen in his mother's parlour; Ope might have perished in mute obscurity, if he had not looked over the shoulder of his young companion, Mark Oates, while he was drawing a butterfly; Giotto, one of the early Florentine painters, might have continued a rude shepherd-boy, if a sheep drawn by him upon a stone had not attracted the notice of Cimabue as he went that way.—*Asiatic Journal*, 1846.

MICE IN GERMANY.

A plague peculiar to the dry districts along the Rhine is found in the mice, which, in a fine season, swarm in such myriads, that whole fields are devastated where no energetic means are adopted for destroying them. It is true that the winter frosts and spring floods cleanse the fields, to all appearance, thoroughly of this nuisance; yet, if the month of May be fine, they appear in August with undiminished force. In various villages, the remedies attempted are different. Sometimes a reward in money is offered per one hundred skins, and the youthful population is encouraged to exert its skill and passion for the chase on the modern hydra. All such efforts prove, however, ineffectual to keep down the numbers of the general foe, whose paths across a corn-field are nearly as broad as those trodden by single foot-passengers, while the hoard abstracted from his crop is estimated by the farmer from the number of straws nibbled off at a short distance from the ground, the ears from which have disappeared within the subterranean labyrinth, that often repay the labour of digging up. In the neighbourhood of Jülich a mode of smoking out the mice has been introduced from Belgium. An iron pan, two feet high, has at bottom a grating supported by a pin. On the grating some charcoal is laid, and the pan, when filled with rags, leather, and sulphur, is fastened with an air-tight cover, which has a small tube, into which a small hose, connected with a bellows, is inserted. The pan is held by an upper and a side handle. The night before it is used the field is surveyed, and all open mouse-holes are trodden close. In the morning, such as are re-opened indicate those which are tenanted, and one being selected, the lower part of the pan is pressed against it, and the bellows being set to work, the smoke issues from the orifice near the grating, and penetrates into the runs and galleries that connect the holes. A number of assistants are required to tread the crevices close through which the smoke is seen to escape; and if

all due precautions be taken, great numbers of these diminutive enemies may be slaughtered, and at the same time buried, in their subterranean holds.—*Banfield's Industry of the Rhine*.

THE POETRY OF RAILWAYS.

[A specimen of 'Voices from the Crowd,' by Charles Mackay, LL.D. London: Orr and Co. This may be called a volume of political poetry—the poetry of the movement party, and especially the party of the Intellectual movement. It is bold and energetic—perhaps too much so—full of fine thoughts and generous aspirations. We particularly sympathise in its anti-war spirit. About a third portion of the pieces have appeared in the *Daily News*.]

No poetry in Railways!—foolish thought
Of a dull brain, to no fine music wrought.
By mammon dazzled, though the people praise
The gold alone, yet shall not we despise
The triumphs of our time, or fail to see
Of pregnant mind the fruitful progeny,
Usurping the daylight of the world's new morn.
Look up, ye doubters, be no more forlorn!
Smooth your rough brows, ye little wise; rejoice,
Ye who despond; and with exulting voice
Salute, ye earnest spirits of our time,
The young Improvement ripening to her prime;
Who, in the fulness of her genial youth,
Prepares the way for Liberty and Truth,
And breaks the barriers that, since earth began,
Have made mankind the enemy of man.

Lay down your rails, ye nations near and far;
Yoke your full trains to Steam's triumphal car;
Link town to town; unite in iron bands
The long-estranged and oft-embattled lands.
Peace, mild-eyed seraph—Knowledge, light divine,
Shall send their messengers by every line.
Men, joined in amity, shall wonder long
That Hate had power to lead their fathers wrong;
Or that false Glory lured their hearts astray,
And made it virtuous and sublime to slay.

Blessings on Science! When the earth seemed old,
When Faith grew dotting, and the Reason cold,
'Twas she discovered that the world was young,
And taught a language to its lisping tongue;
'Twas she disclosed a future to its view,
And made old knowledge pale before the new.

Blessings on Science! In her dawning hour
Faith knit her brow, alarmed for ancient power;
Then looked again upon her face sincere,
Held out her hand, and hailed her—Sister dear:
And Reason, free as eagle on the wind,
Swooped o'er the fallow meadows of the mind,
And, clear of vision, saw what seed would grow
On the hill slopes or in the vales below;
What in the sunny South or nipping Nord,
And from her talons dropped it as she soared.

Blessings on Science, and her handmaid Steam!
They make Utopia only half a dream;
And show the fervent, of capacious souls,
Who watch the ball of Progress as it rolls,
That all as yet completed, or begun,
Is but the dawning that precedes the sun.

POLISH HONEY.

Poland is perhaps the greatest honey-producing country in Europe. In the provinces of Podolia, Ukraine, and Volhynia in particular, the cultivation of the honey-bee has long formed an object of national importance; and in these bee-gardens are not only very numerous and extensive, but they are also common in other parts of the kingdom. There are cottages in Poland, with very small portions of land attached to them, on which are to be seen as many as fifty hives; while there are farmers and landed proprietors who are in possession of from 100 to 10,000 hives! There are some farmers who collect annually more than 200 barrels of fine honey, each barrel weighing from 400 to 500 lbs. exclusive of the wax. A tenant is often in this way enabled to pay his rent and taxes, to defray other domestic expenses, and often to accumulate handsome dowries for his daughters.—*Journal of Agriculture*.

Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh (also 59, Miller Street, Glasgow); and, with their permission by W. R. Oas, Amen Corner, London.—Printed by BRADBURY AND EVANS, Whitefriars, London.